(c) Funding provided under these Centrally Sponsored Schemes has resulted in creation of improved infrastructure for promotion, conservation and development of forests and wildlife.

Fire in forests

3225. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of forests that caught fire this summer and the number of incidents of fire reported, giving the details, State-wise;

(b) whether the fire incidents were successfully controlled in all cases;

(c) the details of the damage caused by these fire incidents; and

(d) the long term arrangements made to control or prevent such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) This information is not collected at the Central level. However, the same is being collected from the State/UT Forest Departments and will be placed on the Table of the House.

(d) The Government of India through its Centrally Sponsored Integrated Forest Protection Scheme provides financial assistance to the State/UT Governments to supplement their forest-fire prevention and control measures. The long term measures being taken to prevent and control forest-fires include:

(i) Setting up of Fire Fighting Cells with surveillance and communication equipments and mobility.

(ii) Fire mapping and preparation of Fire Management Plans.

(iii) Use of MODIS Satellite data through web-based facility for near real time detection of fire and intimation to the concerned State/UT Forest Department by the Forest Survey of India, Dehradun.

(iv) Creation and maintenance of Fire Lines by removal of fire hazards before the onset of fire season and during the season.

(v) Construction of Fire Watch Towers at strategic locations.

(vi) Construction of Water Storage Structures and storage of water.

(vii) Engagement of Fire Watchers during fire season.

(viii) Involvement of local people through Joint Forest Management Committees in surveillance, reporting and fire fighting.

(ix) Training and awareness of personnel and people.

Fire in Corbett National Park

3226. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that high alert has been sounded in the Corbett National Park following a major fire in the periphery of Uttarakhand Park in April this year;

(b) if so, the current status of fire; and

(c) the steps taken to prevent recurrence of such fire incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A red alert was issued by the State for prevention of fire in the Corbett Tiger Reserve. As informed by the State, only 1.5 hectares of the said reserve was affected by fire due to successful fire prevention and control measures.

(c) Under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger, funding support is being provided to the Corbett Tiger Reserve which, *Inter alia*, includes fire prevention, detection and control measures.

Environmental clearance to power projects

3227. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether power projects are facing considerable delay in securing mandatory environmental clearance from Government;

(b) if so, the details of such projects, particularly from Maharashtra;

(c) the main reasons for the delay; and

(d) the steps being taken to simplify and expedite the clearance process?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir. Delay occurs mainly due to non-submission of requisite information by the project proponents.

(b) and (c) No Hydro-electric project from Maharashtra is pending. However, six proposals for grant of Environment Clearance (EC) to thermal power projects have been received from Maharashtra. These are 1600 MW Thermal Power Plant (TPP) at Dhopave, 3×660 MW expansion of Koradi TPP at Koradi, 405 MW TPP at Alibag, Raigad, 1600 MW TPP at Dherand, Raigad, 2×300 MW TTPP at Tadali, Chandrapur and 1×300 MW TPP at Buttibori, Nagpur. The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) in its July meeting has recommended grant of Environmental Clearance to the project at Alibag, Raigad. The projects at Dhopave and Dherand could not be considered for grant of EC due to non-submission of requisite information by the project proponents. The projects at Tadali, Chandrapur and Buttibori, Nagpur have been delisted due to non-availability of water allocation/coal linkage. The proposal for expansion of units at Koradi Thermal Power Project will be considered in the next meeting of EAC to be held in August, 2009.

(d) Draft EIA Notification to further streamline the procedure for consideration of proposals for Terms of Reference and Environmental Clearance has been brought out by the Ministry on 19th January, 2009 for eliciting comments from various stake holders before finalisation. The frequency and duration of Expert Appraisal Committee meetings have also been increased.